

## Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /028 W

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R 290830Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6049

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2058

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: IS SHAYKH ABDALLAH GOING?

1. ACCORDING TO SCENARIO SKETCHED BY FONMIN ABDALLAH ASNAG, MAJLIS SHOULD NOW RECESS, HAVING COMPLETED ITS LAST OUTSTANDING ITEM OF BUSINESS, THE BUDGET. HOWEVER, LOCAL NEWSPAPER YESTERDAY CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT BY SHAYKH ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR THAT MEMBERS OF THE MAJLIS SHOULD NOT DIVERSE AS THERE WERE MANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS STILL TO BE CONSIDERED. ACCORDING TO ABDALLAH, MAJLIS WILL RECONVENE ON SUNDAY AUGUST 3.

2. ABDALLAH'S ONLY GOVT JOB IS SPEAKER OF THE MAJLIS, AND HAMDI TACTIC OF RECESSING MAJLIS WAS IN PART INTENDED TO RETIRE ABDALLAH. THE SHAYKH HAS GOOD REASON TO RESIST TACTIC.

2. ABDALLAH KNOWS HOW MANY OTHER YEMENI POLITICIANS, FORMERLY MEN OF CONSEQUENCE IN THIS COUNTRY'S DECISION-MAKING HAVE BEEN EASED INTO OBSCURITY BY HAMDI. ABDALLAH CLEARLY IS WORRIED ABOUT WHAT IS IN STORE FOR HIMSELF. HE CALLED IN AID DIRECTOR RUIZ, BEFORE THE LATTER LEFT, FOR A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF USG PROJECTS IN ABDALLAH'S NORTHERN CONSTITUENCIES. ABDULLAH HAS BEEN SPENDING TIME IN KHAMR, HIS OLD STAMPING GROUND, RECEIVING AND ENTERTAINING SHAYKHS AND PROBABLY IMPRESSING ON THEM THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF HIS BEING THEIR SPOKESMAN AND

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REPRESENTATIVE IN SANA ON DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER GOVERNMENT

MATTERS.

4. HOWEVER, THE SMART MONEY IN SANA IS ALL WITH HAMDI AT THIS POINT. HAMDI HAS A GROWING REPUTATION FOR BEING ABLE TO DISPOSE OF HIS OPPONENTS. THE POWERFUL MAN HAS A SPECIAL PLACE IN YEMENI POLITICAL IMAGINATION, BUT HAMDI HAS ENHANCED HIS ONLY SHARE BY ACTING WITHOUT INJURING ANYONE.

5. MORE THAN THAT, HAMDI IS USING THE REMARKABLE AND QUITE NEW IMPETUS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO UNDERCUT LOCAL LEADERS. TAXES IN RURAL AREAS ARE LEVIED IN THE FORM OF THE ZAKAT, WHICH IS A TAX ON HARVESTS. AT PRESENT, THIS MOSTLY IS SPLIT BETWEEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS (LDA). IN KHAMR AREA, HOWEVER, THE TRADITIONAL AND FEUDAL ALLOCATION TO THE LOCAL SHAYKH IS STILL MADE, REDUCING THE LDA SHARE. THE SHAYKH IS, OF COURSE, ABDALLAH, AND THOSE WHO WANT WELLS DUG, ROADS CARVED OUT, SCHOOLS OPENED AND CLINICS STAFFED FIND THEMSELVES INSTEAD INVITED TO BANQUETS GIVEN BY ABDALLAH. LDA IN THE KHAMR REGION IS COMPLAINING. THEY WANT THEIR FULL HALF SHARE OF THE ZAKAT FUNDS, AND HAMDI CAN SERVE HIS OWN INTERESTS VERY NEATLY BY SEEING THAT THEY GET IT--AT ABDALLAH'S EXPENSE IN BOTH LOCAL SUPPORT AND INCOME.

6. WHEN HAMDI WILL MOVE AGAINST ABDALLAH, AND HOW FAR HE WILL GO, IS OPEN QUESTION, BUT ONE CLUE WILL BE WHETHER--AND FOR HOW LONG--MAJLIS RECONVENES NEXT WEEK.  
RANSOM

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